

South Puget Sound Forum

Notes from Breakout Group Discussions

Question #1: What most caught your attention in the morning presentations and discussions?

Question #2: What examples do you think present the best opportunities to build on to achieve greater success and which issues need the most urgent attention?

GROUP ONE

Facilitator: Karen Janowitz

Recorder: Stuart Glasoe

Question #1

Must be collaborative effort – don't demonize – need to reach 95-100% of people.

Impressed by variety of groups.

Turned off to some ideas.

No mention of interconnection between surface and groundwater.

General agreement on vision – unclear what the mechanisms are (the 'how to').

On-the-ground work lacks a common pool of knowledge/tools.

What's the next step with these ideas and fit with Puget Sound Partnership.

We need to figure out how to 'tread more lightly'.

Watersheds are a good operational unit, but don't fit with jurisdictional lines.

Need to set clear, positive goals; quantitative objectives w/ timeframes (we've had some that haven't worked).

No mention of reclaimed water.

Need to connect with people upstream – what's my stake?.

People need to feel sense of place.

Need many solutions on many issues.

Need to act on available information.

Businesses respond to incentives – what's in it for me? For example, builders and low impact development.

We're becoming more of a bedroom community.

Predictability is important for business community – some regulation is more reactive than proactive.

Growth pressure is straining the balance, e.g., building more costly homes for people who work elsewhere.

You're not just selling or buying a house, it's also the "place" – should be a great incentive.

This community is "an affordable housing place" for Pierce/King.

Buyers not paying a premium to live in this area; we pay the price with a degraded environment.

Question #2

Community fund that new home buyers would contribute to (a lot of fees already taken out/added to cost).

Information or certificate to new homeowners.

Realtors already provide a lot of information – should be more grass roots –linked with watershed unit.

Use or help create neighborhood networks/centers.

Need shift in people's thinking beyond self.

Thurston County Housing Task Force is a model.

EETAC is another model.

We live in a heritage area – that gives the community an identity – are we are doing enough to preserve it
– are people buying into it?

They need a reason to buy in.

Lake management district another model – education, common interest, welcome wagon.

Not everyone understands what a watershed is.

The story of a place is what people connect to – we're not doing it well – there's a decreasing connection
with place.

Summary points:

1. sense of community, sense of place.
2. education – people need to understand that every action has a reaction, consequence.
3. there are costs associated with growth that people need to pay.

GROUP TWO

Facilitator: Anne Criss

Recorder: Emily Piper

Question #1

Manhole covers.

Watershed identification -- stewardship at home.

Participation.

Welcome to your watershed – through realtors.

Lack of sustainability – keeping efforts sustained overtime with changing leadership (watershed planning
processes, goal setting, shared visions)

Vision from the beginning -- build relationships that endure through time.

Urban growth/population.

I thought things were improving. Why aren't we making more progress? Why the disconnect?

Property values / land use / onsite sewage regulation – \$s for upgrades; fearful reactions – how do you
remove fear of unknown?

Power of community / example of Walla Walla River.

Challenges have changed – need education.

Fear works both ways – powerful what TV can do – what are the avenues for reaching people, collecting
and sharing strategic stories.

Google within the local set – web broadcast.

How will we afford retrofitting?

Analysis of restoration tools we have – what hasn't worked, what has -- anticipating needs, case studies.

Solve problems on an ecosystem level vs. focusing in on one or two pieces.

Common practices – how they affect basic watershed processes – need for information – people would
like to do the right thing but don't know better.

Kids teaching families – leverage point.

Need updated assessment of needs.

How can we be sure we are effectively spending \$s in the right places?

Countering the pace of development – how do we slow down?

Question #2

Population growth – Mason county development regulation – audit of regulations – regulations acting as
disincentive – highlighting the positive.

Gaps of SRP – what is working? what happens on the ground as a result?

Assessment of what new growth means to our area, e.g., operations.

Visioning exercise – setting goals, starting with a diverse group.
 Science and action – moving at realistic paces.
 Shellfish as a gauge – fecal coliform as an indicator – used to build roadmap for problem.
 Awareness and definition of problem, approaches.
 Partnerships – how are they successful forging new partnerships around the exploration of new technologies?
 Linking regional data and experiences.
 Techniques to control growth, prevent pollution.
 Lack of understanding and fear – reaching more segments of the population.
 Partner with the measurements – link to trends – work with the indicators.
 Product labeling laws, right to know top-down information – giving the right information – accessible, simple.

Summary points:

1. Shared vision and strategies, building in sustainability.
2. Motivations and reactions of fear; education & outreach not reaching segments for population.
 - Why aren't we more successful?
 - Tools for engagement.
 - Assessing what is and is not working from regulations.
 - Challenges are changing.
 - Framing problems and opportunities.
3. Approaches:
 - Make information accessible and simple.
 - Label products – consumer right to know.
 - Best practices – explain why people should do certain things.
 - Make sure people understand why certain regulations are important.

GROUP THREE

Facilitator: Naki Stevens

Recorder: Doug Myers

Question #1

What will Thurston County/we do? Seems as though we dropped the ball from earlier efforts.
 Cooperation gets lip service but not actually implemented.
 There is a segment of PS community who don't engage because issue doesn't affect them.
 How about a users fee?
 It will take strong leadership and massive education.
 What creates incentive?
 Population growth statistics and proximity to Sound affecting resources.
 Area seems to lag in some infrastructure improvements.
 Impact fees and other sources of funding to accommodate growth-related infrastructure improvements.
 Need to implement regulations.
 Yelm provides some good examples for implementation (growth impact fees, wastewater reuse).
 Challenges with pharmaceuticals and personal care products – need product labeling and marketing environmentally responsible alternatives.
 Science ability to measure chemicals educates us as to the presence of chemicals that have been there all along.
 Juxtaposition between environment as an issue and attractiveness of the area (quality of life).
 We didn't talk about reuse and funding for implementation.

Impact fees don't address environmental damages. Shouldn't we expand the stormwater utility fee?
Action (hard) vs. education (easy).
Younger generation and cultural diversity within the discussion missing. Need money/credits/training to engage students.
More LEED (green built) models.
Need new water quality testing protocols that consider different aspects.
Us vs. them concept as per Jay Manning's presentation. Still lots of polarization out there (e.g., Initiative 933, Thurston CAO).
Inadequate political models based on confrontation

Question #2

New models of sustainability – Europeans and others showcase what works.
Use local projects as a microcosm. Expand one issue to the fullest.
Education needs to occur at proper scales, e.g., individual choices vs. what's permitted for a whole subdivision.
Can we identify the issue(s)? Prioritize and then follow through.
Issues that are a collective problem are not necessarily seen as a personal problem. Should we redefine problems that resonate better with the individual e.g. human health?
What is my responsibility as an individual in this community?
Tax incentives for positive changes, e.g., armor removal, decrease impervious surfaces, septic inspection and servicing.
The segments of the population who know and care clean-up after those who don't.
There's a disconnect between the public understanding of the most crucial issues and what science tells us are the most crucial issues.
Need to define our community and discuss issues accordingly.
Make it easy (for example, hazardous waste).
Send better messages about collective responsibility.
Market the importance of Puget Sound.
Make each meeting on Puget Sound an example of sustainability.
More geographic passive education defining the community as a basin or watershed (sense of place).
Identify out best, past successes as possible models.
Clearest message is connection to community, e.g., make science and stewardship hands-on and community based.
Why didn't things work that failed?

GROUP FOUR

Facilitator: Karen Fraser
Recorder: Harriet Beale

Question #1

Land use cover/density is not a simple problem. What are the tradeoffs with, for example, low density development vs. sprawl, low impact development?
Shellfish clean the water like trees clean the air.
What is the trend: to protect green space and expand, or to build more compact? Cost of infrastructure is less where development is more compact. Which is better for Puget Sound? Sprawl equals more roads and pollution.
How do you reduce waste and treat it?
Pick one thing at a time. Budd Inlet?

Surprised how much area can't be used for shellfish. Economic potential.
 Do we have the will and the skill to protect the Sound? Why is Case Inlet in trouble?
 Mason County is receiving Thurston County growth. What can we learn from Thurston to avoid losing resources/shellfish. Thurston is receiving King/Pierce growth.
 Budd Inlet – is it just the outfall? LOTT has very high standards and the problem has other causes. What else impacts Budd Inlet? Industry . . . past practices . . . stormwater
 How can we prevent more harm all over? Repair costs more than prevention. How to pay for it? Set priorities, e.g., land trust approach.
 Tribe/Nisqually watershed as example. Find common goals; recognize people as part of ecosystem.
 The emphasis on voluntary over regulatory action. There is a role for regulatory action – necessary. Lots of conflict when try to adopt regulations. But this is how we have predictability. How to balance this? Get everyone at table. Takes both (voluntary and regulatory action). Some regulations conflict with each other. Example: 1) Henderson septs carrot-and-stick approach; 2) could have performance zoning incentives for clean water development such as closer to water.
 Shoreline – bulkheads as problems.
 With regulations, set the target/goal/mandate and filter actions through that. Require low impact development? Offer a menu of options, e.g., donate land as easement.
 Where is this going? What are we trying to accomplish? Governor's Initiative as re-energizer. There should be more people here who are regular citizens. Campaign to get them involved? Today could be the first step.
 Surprise that Henderson has as many problems (or more) than Budd.
 Cost of retrofitting infrastructure.

Question #2

Building on successes what can we do.
 Shellfish cleaning water – biofiltration.
 Water reclamation – reduces wastewater discharges to Sound.
 Community and youth education – will build support for programs we need. Citizens need to be fundamental part of solution, e.g., master gardeners, GRuB (garden raised bounty), Thurston County Waste Management (composting, recycling). Spend more on education: “the long-term investment.”
 Focus on preventing further harm to Henderson, then go to the damaged area like Budd. Model: Capitol Land Trust – buy the land – priority habitat. Shellfish growing – bring into education. Native shellfish – introduce to clean the water.
 Use GMA to concentrate development and save the open space areas.
 City of Lacey work on woodland Creek – partner with St. Martin's – stream team.
 Find one small thing to have a success and rally people – bring sense of being part of it.
 Models: 1) the decrease in smoking by massive campaign – change attitudes. 2) recycling – how society changed – how did it happen as a “social change effort?” Steps – keep momentum going like business model – keep marketing. 3) Oregon “bottle bill” – new source of money for campaign/clean-up effort
 Stormwater is a big problem but discharges are far away – how to connect people to this as an investment – education. How do we show the public what the return on the investment is?
 User fees for Puget Sound. Parks – certain areas. LOTT fees are user fees. Pay true cost of stormwater. Outboard motors – boats – marine fuel tax?
 Forum – pulled together the Governors office for dialogue. Build on it – keep it going. Predictability and incentives. Return next year and expand participation along the way.
 Legal ambudsman for citizens.

GROUP FIVE

Facilitator: Veena Tabbutt

Recorder: Chris Hempleman

Question #1

Olympia storm drains good outreach.

Regular events/outreach needed to keep this in front of people.

We know what to do. Do we have the political courage? Relative importance. Focus on causes, not fixing problems of the moment.

Graphs: past vs. present. In some areas we will need to roll back – near water. Where are these critical areas?

We know what to do. We don't need more studies. Where are we putting limited resources? Find common places.

Focus on simple concepts. Scatter gun approach won't work. Complacency/ignorance is the challenge.

Credibility of neighbors – most effective.

Main sources – focus on neighborhood.

Need to institutionalize knowledge in community. Involve community in solutions – devising and moving ahead – builds community.

Community solutions need to be put in broader context. Holistic approaches.

Population growth projections require alternative solutions, e.g., biomimicry (*biomimicry is the science that studies nature's models and then imitates or takes inspiration from these designs and processes to solve human problems*).

Regulations equal norms, guidance.

Outreach – connect it with people's lives and make it easy.

Enforcement of existing rules needed.

Mis/dis information.

Thinking – waste generated today (clamshells being landfilled).

Education aimed at individual action. Not an event – needs to be ongoing, integrated (curriculum, etc.) pulling people in.

Power of kids

Popularize positive messages (music leaders/stars).

Neighborhood and community forums – not experts, self-educated, interested people results in buy-in and more comprehensive answers.

Find community spark plugs – identify and build skills in them.

How to reach people: churches, go to them.

Most urgent needs: dissolved oxygen in South Sound (not just Hood Canal); screen kitchen waste from septic systems; new septic technologies (nitrogen removal); what about new development of septic? rising sea levels with climate change; storm drain outreach.

Henderson O&M septic as model for Sound.

Target functional areas now while we have a chance Restoration does not equal preservation.

Map in handout – dissolved oxygen graph.

Land use graphic – B&W from handout (reducing impervious surface).

Build smart communities – need to think of sharing funding dense communities with underdeveloped.

(question #2 not address separately by this group)